T.S.Wynkoop

Christianity and Hindooism

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CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM.

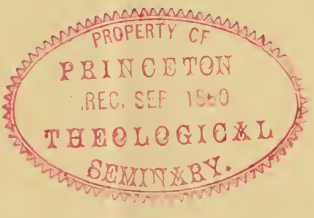
AN ADDRESS

BY

REV. T. S. WYNKOOP,

AND

A LETTER FROM REV. J. WILSON.



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CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM.

An Address Delivered in the Fifth Avenue Church, New York, by Rev. T. S. Wynkoop.

In accepting the invitation of your pastor to address you upon the subject of our missionary work in India, I feel myself in some sort discharging a personal obligation. One of the chief discouragements in that work for the last few years has been the want of funds, due to financial difficulties in this country; embarrassing our Board in all its operations, rendering serious retrenchment necessary, and sometimes threatening to cripple our missions. Missionaries on the ground feel this most keenly. An order for retrenchment passed in the rooms of the Board of Missions seems to the members of the Board a safe financial policy, and to many good men at home the only wise and prudent course. It may be so. But it looks differently to the men from whom the money is withheld, whose chosen enterprises must be curtailed or abandoned, whose wise plans for the future must be postponed perhaps indefinitely, who must often lose even the fruits of past success because they may not push forward to secure them.

In such circumstances, the reports of great efforts made by this church to relieve the funds of our Board, and the munificent gifts of individual members of the congregation in times of special difficulty, have endeared your church and its honored pastor as by a tie of personal gratitude to many a missionary and in many a mission station. We have felt that our necessities were remembered here, that here sympathy was taking its most practical form in that help which was so much needed, without which our hearts would have been still more saddened and our operations still more embarrassed by the necessity of yet further retrenchment. I speak not alone for myself, but for my missionary brethren, when I thank you for your large contributions, often so opportunely given, for the conspicuous example you have set to our entire Church, and for the sympathy and prayer with which your gifts have been consecrated.

Within a few years past India has been brought into unusual prominence in the thoughts and interests of the Christian world. Distinguished travelers, British and American, have visited it, and their letters and books of travel have been widely read. The problems connected with its government by

Great Britain, and its material and moral progress under that government, have been largely discussed in the best magazines and reviews of the day. Able missionary and other lecturers have described its scenery, works of art, and social and religious customs, before large audiences throughout the country. The splendid pageantry connected with the visit of the Prince of Wales, and more recently with the proclaiming of the Queen as Empress of India, has attracted the attention of all readers of our newspapers. Recent distressing cyclones, famines, and outbreaks of epidemic diseases have touched the sympathies of the whole world. This increasing interest in India and information about it can not but be a help to our mission cause, as it brings India so much more within the circle of our thoughts, and makes us more familiar with its condition and necessities.

Assuming, then, your intelligent interest in India and in our missions there, I wish to speak first of the chief obstacles which Hindooism opposes to Christianity; then of certain difficulties which beset the Christian enterprise arising from the peculiar circumstances of its introduction into India and relation to the government of the country; and finally of the results accomplished by our missions and the outlook for the future.

The first, and by far the greatest obstacle to the entrance and spread of Christian truth in India, is the prevalent philosophy which forms the staple of the thought of the people. It has been truly said that the tendency of the Aryan mind, whether in India, Greece, or modern Europe, has always been toward Pantheism. The Brahmins represent that tendency in its least modified form. In early times the Aryan ancestors of the modern Hindoos were doubtless Monotheists. Three thousand years ago, when they first appear upon the stage of history, they had so far departed from the primitive faith that they were worshipers, according to the Vedic ritual, of the Creator as symbolized by the powers of nature, the Sun-god, the Rain-god, the Fire-god, the God of Night, of the Dawn, and the like. A few Vedic names and phrases are still in use; a few Vedic hymns are still chanted, as incantations and sacred formulas, without any understanding of their meaning. Other than this, the Vedas bear not the slightest relation to the thought or worship of the modern Hindoos. No nation ever departed more widely or entirely from its own original sacred writings. A Hindoo reformer has lately excited much attention in the leading cities of Northern India. His one book is the Vedic Scriptures, and his one object to bring back his people to the Vedic faith and worship. No Christian missionary meets with more universal and determined opposition than he. In Benares his life was in danger at the hands of his fellow-pundits. Very many of the people regard him as a Christian emissary in disguise.

This great change of religion is principally due to the influence of the Hindoo philosophy, the rise and early history of which is involved in considerable obscurity. It seems most probable that as much as eight hundred years

before Christ, men of deep thought and austere life, by the banks of the Ganges or the Saraswati, laid at least the foundations of what afterward became the Six Schools of Hindoo Philosophy. Into the intricacies of these schools it would not be profitable to enter. Our object is rather to note the popular thought resulting from these systems, as influencing the religion of India to-day.

If we were asked to name the two conceptions most fundamental to all Christian doctrine, the answer would be, the personality of God and the individuality of the soul of man. God is; I am. He is the Creator; I am His creature. Under His government I have my being. Before me there lies an endless existence, which is supported indeed by Him, but never to be confused or identified with Him. The fundamental conceptions of Pantheism are the direct contradictories of these.

The Hindoo is convinced that God is. His mind and heart are profoundly impressed with Deity. His thinking, more than that of perhaps any other people, begins and ends with God; but not in the sense of a personal being. God is Spirit in the abstract; the Vast or Infinite; the One-Without-a-Second, that is, the One besides whom there is no existence; the Unconditioned, and therefore, in any higher sense, the Unknown and Unknowable. To conceive of Deity under the form of person or ascribe to God personal attributes, is to limit the Absolute and Infinite. Properly speaking, God is That.

The Hindoo will use terms in speaking of God which we are accustomed to associate only with the idea of personality; but he does not so associate them. Nothing that involves either action or passion can be attributed to God. Divesting our words of all thought of personality we may conceive of God under the three-fold form—of unlimited existence, intelligence, and felicity. One of the chief names applied to God in religious conversation is a compound word in four syllables uniting those three conceptions. God is the Infinite, Eternal, Being–Thought–Joy, but without the limitations of personality.

Besides God there is absolutely nothing of which Existence, Thought, or Joy can be predicated. If there were anything which is not God, then God would not be infinite. All which really exists is God, and whatever is not God has no real existence. We are beyond all question conscious of much that is not God. Here the extremest idealism comes to the aid of the pantheistic argument, and declares that all which is not God is illusion, phantasm, deception. Two categories thus embrace all objects of thought, the Real and the Unreal. In the Real, God alone is placed. Everything that is not God falls within the Unreal.

To this corresponds the Hindoo idea of what we have learned from the Christian stand-point to call creation. God is the cause of the material and spiritual universe, so far as these have real existence, but not by creation.

All that exists is, if we may so speak, a projection of the Infinite Spirit. It is the diffusion of the Divine Essence, and is properly not material, but spiritual, since that Essence is spiritual, not material. This marks, as I conceive, the main difference between Hindoo Pantheism on the one side, and European and American Pantheism on the other. The latter is predominantly realistic, and hence material; while the Hindoo is idealistic and therefore spiritual in its form.

It follows from these principles that the soul of man is God. Its conception of being an individual existence other than God is false and vain. To escape from that false conception and its practical results is the chief end of man. The constant illustration is a drop of water, drawn from the ocean by the sun's rays, now floating in vapor, now falling in rain upon the earth, absorbed by a flower, exhaled again and re-formed as a dewdrop, passing through phase after phase of existence, but all the while an essential part of the sea whence it came. The soul is eternal; drawn from its resting place, as the drop from the ocean, it passes in transmigration after transmigration from one stage of existence to another and another, higher or lower, according to an invariable necessity which requires that all deeds and words and thoughts shall receive their due recompense of reward or punishment. Our present state was determined by what we did in previous states of existence; and what we now do will determine our future births. Meanwhile we have lost the consciousness of our divinity and come under the power of the unreal and illusory. And the misery of our present state consists in our twofold bondage; first, the bondage of deeds, whereby we are compelled to pass from one stage to another in the endless round of transmigrations, unable to escape the inevitable retribution or avoid the deeds which require that retribution; and, second, the bondage of ignorance, which holds us in subjection to the illusory and prevents us from rising to the consciousness of our true origin and nature.

Hindoo philosophy teaches, with a fine instinctive spirituality, that the chief aim of man is the attainment of salvation. Health, wealth, honors, pleasures, friends, all fall under the category of the unreal, and are unworthy the attention of the wise. But this salvation is not, as we understand it, deliverance from moral evil and its effects, together with the perfect development of the individual soul in all its powers and capacities, and the attainment of eternal happiness. Salvation is liberation, and liberation is to cut off the long succession of birth after birth, to escape from our separate existence and lose ourselves in God, from whom we came. To recur to the illustration; the rain-drop, changing from place to place and form to form as the very sport of nature, attains at length its supreme felicity, when, falling from a cloud, or flowing with a multitude of other drops in the current of some great river, it reaches once more the sea and is at rest. So for the soul of man, its highest good, its only good, is to merge again in the fullness of the Eternal Spirit, to

attain the state of the unconditioned, to lose itself in the ocean of Existence, Thought, and Blessedness.

How may this liberation be attained? By the removal of that false conception which binds us down in the realms of the unreal and illusory; so that one can say, "I am the Eternal, Self-existent, Infinite God," with the same intuitive apprehension which a hungry man has when he says, "I hunger." He who has attained this apprehension has no longer passion, or any prompting within him to lead to action. He has escaped from the bondage of deeds. With the cessation of action and passion, there ceases the necessity for continued existence, in which the measure of reward and punishment may be meted out. With the necessity of continued existence the reason for future transmigrations ceases. It remains but for the soul, now liberated from bondage to the material and unreal, to pass away forever from suffering. The finite has again become the infinite. The drop has merged in the ocean.

We can not enter here upon any extended criticism of this system of thought. You will observe that all its conceptions of God, of nature, of man, of the cause and nature of human misery and woe, and of the way in which these may be escaped, are false and misleading in the highest degree. Pantheism is not even a religion, properly so-called; since there can be neither worship nor service, to say nothing of love and personal devotion, where there is no personal God.

You will notice that in this system there is no place for morality. Logically, Pantheism knows neither right nor wrong. If God be the only existence, all that takes place must be referred to God. The distinction which we instinctively make between right and wrong has no place in the essence of things, but belongs to the category of the unreal. It is true that righteousness is better than unrighteousness, but neither is better than either of them. Righteousness must be rewarded, hence the soul's separate existence must be continued and its liberation postponed. In other words, piety and good works prevent salvation. The direct and necessary effect of this teaching is to darken the moral sense. The conscience of India has been immeasurably debased by this system of thought; and Pantheism, if it fails entirely as a religion, fails even more conspicuously as a scheme of morals.

The highest attainment at which Pantheism aims is to lead man, entirely ignorant of the living and true God, Creator and Moral Governor of the universe, knowing nothing of the essential law of right and wrong by which all sentient beings must be judged, and unconscious of his guilt and moral pollution, to pronounce with almost inconceivable spiritual pride the words: "I am God." The highest attainment of the Hindoo pietist is blasphemy, and with this blasphemy on his lips he dies.

This system, which is so destructive to all right thinking on religious subjects, and subversive of the very foundation of true morality, forms the

greatest obstacle to Christianity in India.* It has no points in common with Christianity. It furnishes no premise on which a Christian argument can be founded. There is no logical refutation of it. The appeal to common sense is made in vain, since one of the fundamental principles of the system is the entire untrustworthiness and falsity of that consciousness which underlies our common sense. The appeal to science has its base cut from under it, since everything but spirit is unreal and delusive. The Hindoo mind distrusts material science, and looks at modern European and American inventions and applications of science as we look at the exhibitions of a skillful juggler. We are surprised at nothing; but we are also convinced of nothing, save the skill of the conjurer and the unreliability of the testimony of our own senses. Just to the extent to which this Pantheism influences the thought of India, does Christianity find the Hindoo mind preoccupied with ideas which preclude its very entrance.

We come now to notice, as a second great obstacle to the introduction of Christianity into India, the vast and varied system of Hindoo idolatry. At first sight, pantheism and polytheism seem irreconcilable and mutually exclusive. On the contrary, pantheism furnishes the only logical and satisfactory ground for polytheism. If God is everything, then everything is God. The sun, moon, and stars not only represent God; in a sense, they are God, and worship paid to them, is worship paid to God. Certain mountains, certain rivers, certain trees are regarded as possessed of special sanctity. Every Hindoo artisan, at certain seasons, worships his tools, the farmer his implements of agriculture, the banker and the merchant his account books. Every natural object to which awe or mystery attaches, serves to call forth a recognition of that Divinity which is supposed to embrace all existence as infinite space enfolds all magnitudes within itself. Much more must those superhuman existences be worshiped, a belief in whom seems instinctive in the mind of man, as existing in rank upon rank above us in the scale of being.

The intelligent Hindoo does not identify any one or all the three hundred and thirty million deities with the Infinite and Eternal God. Neither Brahma

* Since the above was in type, the English newspapers report the well-known Prof. Monier Williams, of the University of Oxford, as saying, in an address upon "The Chief Obstacles to the Spread of Christianity in India," delivered at a recent missionary conference: "Our main difficulty is in the nature of their religion, that subtle Pantheism, which may profess to include Christianity itself as one of the phenomena of the universe, and does declare itself to have been a true revelation, in a more excellent way, long before Europe had any revealed religion at all." *The English Independent*, quoting this sentence, and remarking the surprise with which it will be received by ordinary Christian men and women at home, adds: "It is evident that nothing could be worse than to send out to India men who have no intellectual power of appreciating such subtle objections, which seem to cut the very ground from beneath the Christian missionary's feet."

nor Vishnu nor Siva is That. The titles which properly belong to The One Without a Second are never applied to the greatest of the gods. Ask the lowest peasant whether God is one or many; his invariable answer is, God is one. But this is not at all inconsistent with his belief in a vast multitude of greater and lesser deities, all less divine than God, but more divine than man. With many of these deities we have no direct concern, while our relation to others of them is most direct and important. Practically, these deities have absorbed the worship and service of all India. Some men worship one, others another. Some parts of India are chiefly worshipers of Vishnu under his many incarnations and manifestations; in other parts the worship of Siva predominates. Different castes and tribes addict themselves to different deities. But no temple is reared to the Great Supreme; no rites are performed in His honor; God is an abstract conception, and not a living reality. His glory they have given to them that are no gods.

When you charge upon a Hindoo the sin and folly of worshiping these inferior deities, while he neglects the God whom he himself acknowledges as the One Supreme, he tells you at once that since God is all, all worship is paid to God, perhaps quoting some ancient verse like the following:

> "Into the bosom of the one great sea,
> Flow streams that come from hills on every side.
> Their names are various as their springs.
> And thus in every land do men bow down
> To one great God, though known by many names."

Or, he will defend himself by a plausible illustration: "Sir, I am a poor man from yonder village. If I have a tax to pay the Government, should I insist on carrying my money to our Queen who lives across the sea; and if I did so, would she see me or receive it at my hand? No more can I take it to the Governor-General in his vice-regal palace in Calcutta. I have to do with the village officer; and what I pay to him, although he is a very inferior officer of the Government, is as truly paid to the Queen as though I laid it at her feet."

If a man, who does not accept the Bible as the Word of God, believes that there are myriads of existences above and around him, who, although they are not God, are deities to whom his worship and service are due, whose anger he has every reason to avoid and their favor to gain, I do not know any logical process by which I can convince him of the contrary.

I get no help from the philosopher. He does not perhaps believe in the gods himself. It may be he considers himself by philosophical methods nearer salvation than they are; since the gods themselves are bound in the bondage of the unreal, or else they too would cease to suffer the evil of a separate existence and merge in the divine ocean of the Infinite. But the very idolatry and superstition on which he personally looks down, he regards as necessary

for the mass of men. The common people can not attain the eminence of philosophic thought. They must reach after the deity in lower methods and by lower aids. If they are faithful in those services which they can now understand and render, they will be rewarded perhaps in their next birth by such a position in life that they may attain liberation by the higher methods. Although wonderful stories are told by priests and others of men in days past who attained immediate salvation by the practice of rites that are still observed, I never met with a Hindoo who expected that he could thus be saved. His best hope is in this present life to merit a future birth somewhat nearer to the object of his desires. For remember, that heaven itself is not liberation or full salvation. It is a state of much happiness; but a man whose next transmigration will be to that abode of happiness, may, by that very transmigration, postpone indefinitely his hopes of ultimate liberation and linger in the misery of separation from God.

In this connection we may repeat to you the *Quaternion of Requisites*, the four qualifications which are necessary before one may so much as enter upon the study of the higher philosophy of the Hindoos with any hope of attaining salvation thereby. These are:

1. The discrimination of the eternal substance from the transient, *i. e.*, a clear understanding that God is the eternal substance and all else is non-eternal.

2. Disregard of the enjoyment of the fruits of the here and the hereafter. By fruits of the here we are to understand all good things of the present life; by fruits of the hereafter, blessings to be enjoyed in a future state, such as heaven, or the rewards due to meritorious actions done in this life. In other words, this second qualification is the disregard of everything, present or future, save only the liberation of the soul from the bondage of the unreal and its union with the All-Spirit.

3. The possession of the six mental attitudes which befit the seeker after liberation; as follows:

1st. *Tranquillity*, the restraining of the thoughts and desires from everything save God. 2d. *Self-restraint*, the complete mastery of the body and its senses, so that they shall not interfere with the concentration of the whole being upon God. 3d. *Quiescence*, the entire refraining from all other duties save those involved in this concentration, as, for example, duties owing to a parent by the child, or a husband to a wife, or a servant to his employer. This requirement alone shuts the seeker after God off from every human relationship and absolves him from every tie to kindred or society. 4th. *Endurance*, of hunger and thirst, cold and heat, watching, and whatever other suffering will be the means of subduing the spirit and mortifying the flesh. 5th. *Contemplation*, the fixing the whole soul in meditation upon God and the study of truth. 6th. *Faith*, the implicit reception of the teachings of the spiritual guide and preceptor.

4. That overmastering desire for liberation, which alone can lead to and sustain in this study and self-denial.

Such are the qualifications required, at least in theory, of him who would attain salvation by means of philosophy. They will convince us how impossible it appears to the ordinary Hindoo that he should reach his goal by this lofty path. Nothing is left for him but to avail himself of the gods and their worship, and get from them what help he can.

Of the popular idolatry and superstitions of the Hindoos I need not speak at length. Its main features are described in many books and are not unfamiliar to you. Nor could it be put into any systematic form. Every man may find, in the vast number of the gods and their varying forms of worship, what suits him best. He may change from one to another as he pleases. No one aspect of Hindoo popular religion represents more than a single phase of it. It is multiform to the last degree. The very sacred books are at variance among themselves. Modern Hindooism is a thousand religions massed in one, with ample room for unnumbered superstitions, old and new, all of which are orthodox to all who accept them and tolerated by all the rest.*

Of the enormities of Hindooism in some of its developments I dare not speak. No ingenuous Hindoo can refer to them without a blush of shame, though he is powerless to prevent them. But I must not fail to remind you that some such union of specious pantheistic philosophy with degrading idolatry and dark superstition, with all the fearful moral evil accompanying them—philosophy for the few, superstition for the many—would almost certainly be the religious condition of the Christian world to-day, were it not for the Gospel of Christ. India, China, and Japan represent to us at present the best that man can do for himself without a revelation from God. The condition of

* "In India," says the late Rev. J. Wilson, D.D., so well known in connection with the Scotch missions in Bombay, "we have to deal with elaborated systems of faith and practice which are allied, and intimately allied, with every principle congenial to the natural depravity of man, and suited to every variety of temperament and condition of life. Hindooism, though it has gone through many changes, is still the grandest embodiment of Gentile error. It is at once physiolatrous in its main aspects, and fetish in its individual recognitions of particular objects of power for good or evil; polytheistic and pantheistic; idolatrous and ceremonious, yet spiritual; authoritative and traditional, yet inventive and accommodative. The lower classes of society it leaves in the depths of ignorance and darkness, without making any attempt to promote their elevation. The indolent and inane succumbing to its trying climate, it leaves in undisturbed repose. To the curious and inquisitive it furnishes, in its remarkable schools of philosophy, systems of combined physics and metaphysics, at once empirical and deductive; and which exercise and yet weaken and pervert the intellectual faculties, and that without any clear recognition of moral obligation and duty to God or man. To the lovers of excitement and amusement, it furnishes a boundless store of myths, fables, and fictions. To the active and superstitious, it affords a never-ending round of foolish and frivolous ceremonies, which engross most of their time and energies. To the rich, wealthy, and powerful, it literally promises and sells pleasure in this world,

Greece and Rome was no better; indeed, at the time when Christianity was making the conquest of the Roman Empire, was probably worse than that of India now. That we have a truer philosophy, a higher morality, a religion that does unite the soul to God and give it eternal life through Jesus Christ, we owe to the written Word of God entrusted to the Church of Christ, the pillar and ground of the truth.

In connection with what has been said of the popular philosophy and idolatry of India, I must not omit to name that system of caste which guards Hindooism on the social side from change. Not only are there the four great castes with which all are familiar—the Brahmin caste, the Soldier caste, the Merchant caste, the Laborer caste. These are almost infinitesimally divided and subdivided—each subdivision virtually a caste in itself.* And, outside the four castes, the very Pariahs have their distinctions, which they hold with equal tenacity. Nor is the distinction, so far at least as belongs to the main caste divisions, an arbitrary one. The Brahmin and the Sudra live side by side, like the trout and the minnow in a brook. They are both fish, but of different species. They may swim in the same water and eat the same kind of food, but the minnow can never by an possibility become a trout, nor the trout a minnow. No more could the Sudra become a Brahmin, or the Brahmin a Sudra. Hindoo society is thus in all relations, except those of business and trade, a series of narrow strata laid over one another with the immovability of the strata of rock in a mountain. They touch at the surface only; and each caste is impermeable by members of any other. One effect of caste is to crush out individuality—to limit the intimate relationships of life to a narrow social circle, and compel the individual to remain forever in that narrow circle, subordinat-

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with the expectancy of its continuance in those which are hoped will come. Those who love to rove, it sends away on distant journeys and pilgrimages. Those who are morbid and melancholy, it settles on the hill of ashes. Those who are disgusted with this world, it points to the wilderness. Those who are tired of life, it directs to the uneral pile, the idol car, or the lofty precipice. To those who are afraid of sin, it prescribes easy and frivolous penances, or directs to the sacred lake or river, in which they may be cleansed from all pollution. Those who need a Mediator, it commends to the Guru, who will supply all deficiencies and answer all demands. To those who are afraid of death, it gives the hope of future births, which may be either in a rising or a descending scale. Those who shrink from the view of these repeated births in human and infra-human forms, it directs to the absorption of the Vedantist, or the Nirvana, the totally unconscious existence or absolute extinction of the soul of the Buddhist or the Jaina. Need we wonder that Hindooism has had its millions of votaries, and that, with some conspicuous losses, it has retained them for thousands of years, up to the present day?"

* The census of the Hindoo State of Travancore has been completed within a few months—the first census ever taken by a native Indian Government. It contains the statistics of 420 different castes, in a country somewhat less in size than the State of New Jersey.

ing the whole round of his thought and action to the will of his caste fellows. In all considerable matters no man thinks of deciding for himself. He must do as his fellows. He is born into a society from which he can escape only by ostracism; and if ostracized, is thenceforth absolutely alone, for no caste will receive him. A Pariah might perhaps take pity on a wandering dog, but the highest Brahmin ejected from his caste could no more enter the caste of that Pariah than the Pariah could be admitted to that of the Brahmin.

This social tie binds Hindoo society in chains of iron, and completes the hold which Hindooism has upon India. Of the three obstacles to Christianity which we have mentioned, pantheism is undoubtedly the central and chief. We may liken caste to the outworks of a fort, designed to keep the invader from its walls. The idolatry and superstition of the country would represent those walls thus guarded. While the pantheistic thought, informing the whole, and giving unity, coherence, and resisting strength to both the others, is the impregnable citadel within. I say impregnable, because once and again earnest and sincere reformers have arisen within Hindooism. Almost always they have discarded caste, and for the most part rejected idolatry. But never yet has Hindoo reform succeeded in shaking off the subtle spell of pantheistic thought, and consequently idolatry and caste have gradually regained their hold and defeated each reform. Christianity, and this alone, can supplant pantheism, intrenched, as it is, in such a vast system of popular superstitions, and guarded so closely by caste. But Christianity has never yet met a foe more completely defended, more difficult of successful attack.

It has been our endeavor in the preceding paragraphs to describe the opposition which Hindooism presents to Christianity, as a system of philosophic thought and a congeries of popular superstitions, intrenched in characteristic social institutions peculiarly hostile to change. In meeting this opposition, Christianity itself labors under serious disadvantages, which must be briefly indicated as essential to an adequate idea of the conflict of the two religions.

And, first, it must be remembered that our Protestant Christianity was not first introduced into India by men of holy and consecrated life. Long before missionaries were sent, Christianity was presented to the Hindoo mind by the horde of traders, soldiers, adventurers, who sought their fortunes in India. The armies of Clive and Hastings, the factors of the East India Company, the unprincipled adventurers who escaped to the Indies from scenes of violence in Europe, or sought there a field of gain, were poor representatives of the religion of Jesus Christ. Yet the first impressions of Christianity made upon the Hindoo mind were made by them. Except the Roman Catholic missionaries in Southern India, and the effete Syrian Christians of the Malabar coast, the only Christians seen or known in India for an hundred and fifty years were these men. It was inevitable that Christianity should appear to the people of the country as it was set forth in their lives, and that it should be associated

with violence and chicanery, rapacity and insolence, drunkenness and passion. The impression thus made upon the people, and deepened by the history of more than a century of aggression and conquest, was entirely false, but one which clung to the hearts of the people, and has not even yet passed entirely away. Over great tracts of country as yet but little affected by education or personal contact with real Christians, the Christian religion is regarded as sanctioning all manner of evil and leading to all kinds of crime. Perhaps two-thirds of the Hindoo races still regard the two distinctive features of Christianity as eating beef and drinking brandy. Such prejudices are deep-rooted and exceedingly hard to remove. They constitute a real hinderance to the spread of Christianity, on which lies the burthen of proving the popular conception wrong, and demonstrating itself by living examples a pure and holy faith.

Besides this erroneous, but under the circumstances not unnatural, judgment of Christianity, it is quite impossible for any considerable number of Christians to live in India and not shock deeply the prejudices of the Hindoos. Reference has just been made to eating beef. To the Hindoo mind it is a great sin to destroy any animal life, and especially the life of that most sacred of all animals, the cow. According to most Hindoo codes of law, it is a greater crime to kill a cow than to kill a man. It would be possible for the missionary to accommodate himself to this prejudice, and abstain from animal food at considerable expense to his health and strength, but this would not avail while all about him soldiers, civilians, planters by hundreds are pursuing an opposite course. He can denounce intemperance, but has no ground for denouncing the use of beef and mutton. Or take another illustration : All over India the very necessary, but unsavory, office of the public and private scavenger is given to the sweeper caste, which is naturally at the very bottom of the social scale. With his exaggerated notions of personal cleanliness and purity, no Hindoo outside of the sweeper caste could touch so much as the clothes of one of them without incurring ceremonial defilement ; and to receive food from their hands would be worse than death. A certain mission in Northern India grew up in connection with an orphanage, in which were gathered a large number of children made orphans during a terrible famine which desolated the country many years ago. Perhaps the missionaries were not aware of the strength of this prejudice ; but whatever the reason may have been, the persons whom they first employed to feed these children were of the sweeper caste, and the impression made upon the whole community in which that orphanage and mission were situated, was that the Christians were entirely dead to any sense of propriety or decency. Matters like these are entirely trivial when viewed from our standpoint, but from that of the Hindoo they are of great importance. Doubtless in many particular cases such prejudices may be avoided, but without becoming thorough Hindoos it is inevitable that we should be often shocking their sense of propriety and enlisting many of their unreasonable prejudices against Christianity.

The cause of Christianity in India must also sustain a considerable amount of political opprobrium as the religion of the government which has displaced the native dynasties, changed the ancient laws and customs, and holds the country in its possession by right of conquest. Not that the mass of the people of India hate the British government, or actively desire its overthrow. But an alien government can never be a popular one. And although the impartial observer will gladly testify that never in all history has a nation governed a vast and distant dependency so wisely and well as India has been governed for the last half century, yet it must be said that the people of the country do not love the government or its administrators, and that if the British forces who garrison its forts and overawe the great native princes were withdrawn from India, popular risings would soon repeat in all parts of the country the scenes of the Sepoy mutiny. To the religion of this alien government is opposed whatever of patriotism the Hindoo feels. Hindooism is not a religion accepted from without, but developed from within. Its saints and heroes are national, its institutions are identified with all the past glory of the country and race. To give up these and accept the religion and institutions of the conqueror seems to the Hindoo to be treason to his native land.

While Christianity thus suffers a disadvantage from its being the religion of the present government of India, the influence of that government is not, on the whole, favorable to the missionary enterprise. The Christian missionary has, indeed, under the British government, the great advantage of protection to life and property while engaged in his work. The strong arm of the law protects him from violence, and, to a certain extent, protects the native converts; although it must be confessed that in parts of India the law, as interpreted by British judges, is an engine of cruelty and injustice as applied to converts from Hindooism to Christianity. The position of the government with reference to the different religions is one of considerable delicacy, and brings forward many difficult questions. If administered always by wise and truly Christian statesmen, it could be of great assistance in the evangelization of the country. Many of the ablest Indian officials have, without overstepping the limits of toleration for all religions, given their countenance to all wise efforts to bring the truth to bear upon the people. Religious neutrality is one thing, and indifference to all religion is quite another. And it is to be regretted that the present government of India, while justly professing to accord equal rights to Hindoos, Mohammedans, and Christians in the practice of their several religions, should yet, upon the whole, throw the preponderance of its influence against the Christianization of the country.

Mission work is further complicated by the division of India into so many different races, with distinct languages and varying race characteristics. India is not one country, but many. A continent, equal in geographical extent to all Europe, outside of Russia, it is even more divided than Europe into nationalities. The races of the north are as different from those of the South

as the Germans from the Spanish or Italians. The Hindooism of Rajpootana is no more like that of Travancore than Greek Christianity is like Roman Catholicism. The languages of North India are cognate. So are those of South India. But they constitute two distinct classes of language; and the various languages of the aboriginal races of Central India are formed upon a conception totally distinct from that of either of the other classes. No man can be a missionary to India at large, but only to that part of India to which he may be sent. Languages learned in one part of India are useless in others. Methods of missionary labors useful in one district may not prove so in others. Instead of one translation of the Word of God, at least fifteen or twenty must be made and printed.* So of the entire series of books and tracts, controversial, and explanatory of the Christian religion, and the text-books used in all vernacular education. That is to say, in the one department of literary work, including the translation of the Scriptures, many times the effort is required for India which would be necessary if one language were used.

It follows partly from this diversity of race, language, and circumstance in India, and partly from the divisions of Christians themselves in their different nationalities and denominations, that there has been less of unity in missionary effort than is necessary to secure the highest results. Not that different denominations have interfered with or worked against each other. In spite of occasional clashing, we may say that in general the different missions have worked together in harmony and with Christian co-operation. But these Christian workers, all too few, some British, others German, others American, some representing the Lutheran doctrine and polity, others belonging to the Church of England with its liturgy and Episcopal government; others Scotch, Irish, or American Presbyterians, and still others English Baptists or American Methodists, all earnest in their own peculiar beliefs and methods of working, are necessarily much separated from one another and lose the advantages which arise from unity of organization. The missionary body is said at present

* A recent pamphlet, entitled "Rome's Relation to the Bible," issued by the Calcutta Bible Society, contains a Historical Table of Translations of the Scriptures by Protestants for the use of the inhabitants of India. In this table, which does not profess to be exhaustive, a list is given of versions of the Scriptures, either in whole or part, made into no less than sixty-three different languages and dialects. In eighteen of these languages the entire Bible has been translated and published. In twenty-six more the entire New Testament and parts of the Old Testament have been issued. In the remaining languages portions of the New Testament, and occasionally of the Old Testament, have appeared, but neither Testament complete. Some of the sixty-three languages have been reduced to writing by the missionaries. In several of them the translations of the Scriptures have been carefully revised again and again. The whole represents an amount of labor on the part of Indian missionaries, of which, perhaps, few of the warmest friends of missions are aware.

It may be added that Romish versions of the Scriptures in the field covered by these Protestant versions, are only two, viz.: the New Testament, in Hindustani, Patna, 1864; and The Four Gospels and Acts in Tamil, Pondicherry, 1857.

to number about six hundred men. Of these one-sixth are probably always absent on furlough or laid aside by ill-health, leaving five hundred in active service. This number of missionaries scattered up and down over a region of country as large as all Europe outside of Russia, holding in any considerable force only a few great cities, separated from each other not only by geographical distance, but also by the difference of race and language between those among whom they labor, each particular mission acting only on its own plan and method, without reference to other missions near or far, are certainly working at a disadvantage as compared with the same number of men under one general supervision, carrying out one set of ideas and each supporting the other in all details of their work.

Such is the opposition of Hindooism to Christianity, and such some of the disadvantages under which the missionary enterprise must be carried on in India. At the beginning of the present century Protestant missions had scarcely established a foothold, and were still prohibited in the dominions under control of the East India Company. Twenty-five years later all India was open for missionary efforts, and the churches of Europe and America were beginning to enter it in force. Each following decade has seen new ground occupied, new missions opened. The ten years between 1835 and 1845 saw our Presbyterian missions established, although our missionary stations were much fewer then than now. The Sepoy mutiny in 1857 marks an era in Indian history. The attention of the Christian world was fixed upon India with special interest. Old missions were strengthened, and important new ones begun. Upon the whole it may be said that a half century of Christian effort has been expended upon India, during which from a hundred and fifty to five or six hundred missionaries have been working there, assisted by many earnest Christian men in the civil and military service of the British government, and by many native Christians whom God has raised up as teachers and preachers from among the converts of the missions.

Let us see what results have been accomplished by these agencies. Over two-thirds of India there stretches a network of mission stations, occupying all the prominent cities and many of the larger towns. The remaining third, which is partly difficult of access and partly territory under the dominion of native princes who are not favorable to the introduction of Christianity, has scarcely been touched, although within the last few years several very promising new stations have been taken up by our own and other missionary organizations. But go where you will, along any of the great lines of travel throughout India, you will find in every place of importance the mission station, a center of light and evangelization, where the church and the school, if not also the printing-press, the hospital, the orphanage, mark the beneficent enterprises of Christianity, and Christian men and women are devoting themselves in every way to promote the welfare of the people.

In these great centers of influence, the Gospel has been faithfully preached and taught in the schools, until a large number of people are familiar with the outlines of saving truth. And from these centers the missionary and his native helpers have gone over wider and wider circles proclaiming their heavenly message to multitudes of hearers. Much of this preaching is necessarily fragmentary and imperfect, but it awakens attention, removes prejudice, and prepares the way for further instruction.

In all the principal languages of the country the Word of God has been translated and widely circulated, with many other books and tracts, suited to different ages and classes of readers. Formerly these were given away to all who could be induced to receive them. But of late years the demand has so increased that it is now almost the universal practice to sell our Christian publications. The missionary and his assistants sell them in the streets and at the religious and other gatherings of the people; the colporteurs sell them in the railway stations and from village to village; and in some parts of India the very Hindoo and Mohammedan booksellers have begun to keep them in their stock, merely for the profit which they can make by selling them.

Missionary schools in India, from the village school where only the simpler branches are taught in the vernacular, to the English high-schools and colleges in the great cities, have played a most important part and are still very prominent in the educational work which has done so much to awaken thought and stimulate progress in that country. In all these schools and colleges the great aim has been to communicate religious instruction. And, apart from the number of actual conversions, it is impossible to estimate the influence which they have exerted upon the educated classes of Hindoo society. Among all who have come under these influences the power of Hindooism is greatly weakened, and many persons have been deeply impressed by Christian truth who have not been able to make the sacrifice involved in its public acceptance.

The number of persons gathered together in Christian churches as the direct fruits of Protestant missions in India is now upwards of 300,000, without counting those who have fallen asleep. It would be too much to claim all of these as truly godly, Christ-like men. But in general the native Christian community is fully deserving of our confidence. It has been tried by persecution, and has added Hindoo names to the roll of the Christian martyrs. It has yielded a large proportion of its members to the service of Christ in earnest and faithful ministry among their fellow-countrymen. It is becoming more and more, not only self-supporting, but aggressive. The example of many of these native brethren is doing more to convince and attract the heathen among whom they live than any mere preaching could do. The Christian community, as a whole, is steadily rising in the popular esteem; and, scattered as it is among so many provinces of India, it forms the nucleus everywhere of the greater ingatherings for which we labor and hope.

Great attention is being paid in all parts of India to the perfecting of those

ecclesiastical organizations by which the power of the Christian community shall be brought to bear most efficiently upon the mass of heathenism about it, and upon the training of those pastors and evangelists who shall instruct the churches and carry the Gospel in their preaching and teaching far beyond the limits which can be reached by the foreign missionary. The successes of the future will largely depend upon the native ministry; and God is giving to His churches men who are qualified by gifts of nature and of grace to assume the great responsibilities thus laid upon them.

In all these respects, missionaries are able to report satisfactory and gratifying progress, and this not in certain specially favored localities, but in all parts of the wide field, not in a single department, but in all departments of missionary effort. This progress is uniform and steady. Whatever of gain is made is retained, and each fresh advance furnishes vantage ground for further success. There are probably no five hundred Christian ministers in any part of the world upon whom greater responsibilities are laid, and none who are accomplishing more for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of Christ, than the men who are honored in holding the position of missionaries in India.

But let us not receive the impression that India will probably be soon converted to the faith of Christ. Three hundred million souls, held for ages under the triple bondage of pantheism, idolatry, and caste, and loving and glorying in that bondage, are not to be easily delivered from it, though the number of Christian workers were multiplied an hundred-fold. All things are possible with God; and if it please Him to pour out His Spirit upon the whole nation and raise up in all its races and languages men of Apostolic gifts and fervor, we may see in a few years glorious triumphs of the Gospel on a greater scale than ever before in human history. But that is not the way in which God usually works, nor do we see signs of any such unusual successes in India. We see nowhere any general weakening of Hindoo thought or superstition, any wide-spread turning toward Christianity, upon the part of the mass of the people. Christianity must win its success in India by earnest, persevering work, and by steady toil undermine the almost impregnable defenses of Hindooism. Your missionaries do not shrink from the task given them to do, and are not disheartened by the difficulties which face them. The work advances. The end is secured by the promise of God. Let the whole Church of Christ not withhold their sympathies and prayers.

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDOOISM.

Rev. James Wilson, for many years connected with our mission in India, sends the following communication in reply to a quotation in Mr. Wynkoop's first article on Christianity and Hindooism. As it gives another view of the subject so strongly presented by Mr. Wynkoop, our readers will be glad to see

it, and especially as it comes from one of the early missionaries of our Church to India:

I have just been reading the part of Rev. T. S. Wynkoop's lecture on "Christianity and Hindooism" in the number of the FOREIGN MISSIONARY for July, and the note respecting the address of Prof. Williams, of Oxford, on the same subject, and noticing the impression which it seems to have made on the mind of the editor of the *English Independent*, who says: "It is evident that nothing could be worse than to send out to India men who have no intellectual power of appreciating such subtle objections which seem to cut the very ground from underneath the Christian missionary's feet."

I have no doubt but many of the readers of those addresses, in this country also, will take up the same impression, unless the authors, or some one else for them, shall guard them against such impression by reminding them of the Saviour's words, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." There is a broad substratum of clear, strong common sense among the more intelligent of the common people in India, whose minds soar, not to the hazy regions of their philosophy, and who can, after a while, perceive the keen edge with which the Bible cuts away the gossamer threads of such philosophy. I have often heard men of that class, after they had had the Bible in their hands for some time, still making no profession of intention to become Christians, address me thus: "Sir, this Christian book of yours is the strangest book I ever saw. It just speaks right home to all that is inside of a man, as if it knew all that is in him." And much more in the same strain. Doubtless it is of great importance to the missionary work that there should be a few men here and there among them like Mr. Wynkoop and Prof. Williams, who should prepare themselves to follow the learned Brahmins through all the mazes and plausibilities and intricate windings of their systems of philosophy, in which they have the wide fields of the universe to range at pleasure without any fixed principle or standard by which their wildest vagaries can be tested or brought to any positive bearings. But that is not the field in which the great mass of the missionary work is to be done. The missionary work is mainly to be carried forward by men of sincere, earnest, tried piety, well-furnished minds, sound common sense, and good capacities to estimate human character, and the fitness of things in general.

Not much is to be gained by any man's allowing himself to be led out by a learned Brahmin into the wide and wild fields of heathen philosophy. I, when I had been a few years in India, made a few experiments in that line. But I soon discovered that it was very much like an effort to surround and corner a wild and wayward mule in the center of a prairie field 50 miles in diameter. I could not approach him from any quarter but from which he could escape in any one of many directions. I soon learned that that was not the place in which to pen a wild and wayward mule, nor an astute and trained Brahmin. After a few fruitless efforts in that direction, I learned to permit

the Pundit (learned Brahmin) to make his statement without interruption in terms like these : "God exists in every form of animated being, and in everything. God is in you, in me, in him, in this table, this chair, this stone, in everything around us. God enables me to lift my hand, to move my lips, to use my voice. Then if there was sin or wrong in that fraud, or falsehood, which you charged upon me (alluding to some charge of the kind just made), the blame does not rest on me, but on Him above who lives, and thinks, and speaks, and acts in me," etc. I then would kindly, but very earnestly, reply : "I have neither time nor taste for following you through all the mazes of your philosophical speculations, etc. I will take my position just here : your own heart knows that it was not God, but your own self, that did the wrong in question, and that the whole blame rests on you alone." In many cases the man would frankly admit the truth of the charge, or, if he did not, some of those present would say, "Oh, yes, he knows very well that that is true ; but he does not like to own it." Thus God has provided a much shorter and surer way to the human heart than through the labyrinths of philosophy and metaphysics. And the great mass of missionary labors lie in that field.

The same principle applies to the missionary work as to that of the ministry at home. It would not be a wise policy to refuse to introduce any one into the office of the ministry who had not so waded through the profound depths of "science" as to be able to cope with Tyndal and Darwin, and such as they, in their own chosen fields of speculation, simply because the principal portion of their labors lies in a different direction ; namely, in dealing with the "consciences" and conduct of men as "sinners," conscious that they are sinners, and in unfolding and applying the teachings of the Bible to their felt necessities, and as that which alone can point them to deliverance from sin and conduct them to the inheritance of "eternal life" in a happier and a better world. And all that pertains to the attainment of that inheritance lies along the lower plane of ordinary common sense, and of candor, and honesty of purpose, in applying the plain ordinary teachings of the Bible to the ordinary condition and wants of human life.

The great doctrines of the Bible, and of human salvation, are not to be sought for in the recondite speculations of science. "It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say, who shall go up and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. xxx. 12).

There is a broad field of common sense among the masses of the people, both in Christian and in heathen countries. And that common sense, in connection with the consciousness that they are sinners which all men bear about with them, is the element with which the missionary abroad, and the minister at home, have chiefly to deal in the important field of their labors.

In a large amount of varied converse which I had with nearly every class of Hindoos during the years which I spent in India, I never found a man so

utterly debased in mind but that I could lead him to see and feel that there is a difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, between virtue and vice, and to feel and acknowledge that he was a sinner, *i.e.*, that he had sinned against a superior being (by whatever name he might call that superior being), and that something must be done to propitiate that superior being. And here is the point at which we can begin our missionary work among the heathen. And if I have not mistaken the case, it is about at the same point that the same work has to be commenced at home.

Then the conversation turns on what is the character of that superior being; and what kind of services or offerings will propitiate him; and what sort of character and habits must be cultivated in those who aspire to please him and enjoy his favor. Here is the field in which the labors of the missionary abroad, and of the minister at home, have their principal range, and in which their principal fruits are gathered. For, as a general thing, those who feel themselves intellectually or pecuniarily raised far above the masses found on this broad plain, are rarely disposed to give much attention to the concerns of a future or higher life—at least until they have run the pleasures of this present life to the very utmost verge. It is not, therefore, of any great importance, in arranging efforts for the salvation of men, to adopt plans to suit the case of these elevated classes; for, if God is pleased to reveal Himself in their hearts, He brings down their lofty notions of themselves to the low level from which the masses of mankind can look up to the "Author of their salvation" suspended on a cross.

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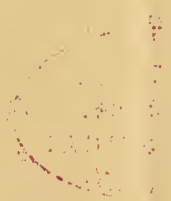

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